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Refuge Volunteers Make A Difference

Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge relies heavily on its versatile group of volunteers to help keep its numerous programs and projects going. Refuge volunteers contribute their time to help with biological work, habitat restoration, and public use programs.

“Last year, Refuge volunteers contributed 7,140 hours,” said Jeannine Kimble, outdoor recreation planner with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. “Without the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, the Service would have a difficult time completing its mission.”

Volunteer activities include assisting with weekend drop-in programs, serving as Refuge tour guides, and sharing knowledge about the history, nature and wildlife of the Refuge. Volunteers also serve as roving interpreters on nearly eight miles of trails. The group interprets information for the public and answers visitor questions. Some Refuge volunteers (who are also members of the National Audubon Society) assist with an annual bird count and collaborate with the Denver Field Ornithologists. Individuals also help Service staff with behind-the-scenes administration work.

In April, the Service will host its annual volunteer appreciation event to express its gratitude to the Refuge volunteers for all their hard work and dedication.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Refuge, call Kimble at 303-289-0471 or e-mail her at Jeannine_Kimble@fws.gov. ■

MILESTONES

Comments are always welcome.
Please forward to:
Public Relations Department
Rocky Mountain Arsenal, Bldg. 111
Commerce City, CO 80022

(303) 289-0136
www.rma.army.mil

RMA Health Line at the Rocky
Mountain Poison and Drug Center
1-888-671-7848

Editor
Susan Ulrich

DPRA, Inc.,
Media Design Group

Writer
Carla Johnson

Art Director/Graphic Designer
Kathy Fisher

Photographers
Rich Keen • Josh Barchers



ROCKY MOUNTAIN ARSENAL • WINTER 2005

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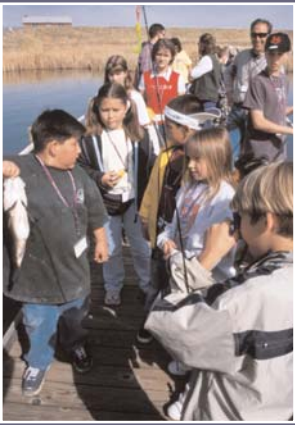


Photo by Josh Barchers/DPRA, Inc.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly 10,000 people
visited Rocky Mountain
Arsenal National Wildlife
Refuge during 2004.

Visit our website:
www.rma.army.mil



Piles of crushed concrete from the former airport are being utilized in the environmental cleanup at the Arsenal.

Rocky Mountain Arsenal Is Largest Customer For Stapleton Concrete

What does a former airport do with miles of runway, taxiway, and apron concrete and asphalt when making way for redevelopment? If you're Stapleton, you work with your neighbor to create a win-win arrangement.

“Stapleton has a unique product with its airport concrete,” said Jed Lowrey, project manager for TetraTech FW Inc., a contractor to the Rocky Mountain Arsenal (Arsenal). “It's stronger than normal concrete because it was subjected to more stress. It's also a higher quality.”

Airport concrete has twice the compressive strength as concrete used in highway and building construction. Strength is an important quality in concrete as it is a good indicator of its resistance to aging and degradation.

This is where the Arsenal comes in. Crushed concrete is exactly what the Arsenal needs for its environmental cleanup work. In fact, Arsenal and regulatory agency staff members have agreed that crushed concrete

is suitable for constructing the caps (or covers) over landfills and consolidation areas. The

“Stapleton needed to remove the concrete, asphalt and aggregate material so the land could be developed and we needed it for our cleanup work.”

Jed Lowrey, project manager TetraTech FW Inc.

concrete is used to create a wildlife barrier that separates the cap from the contaminated soils placed in the landfills and consolidation areas. The barriers keep animals from burrowing into the waste. The wildlife barrier is just one of several components that cover a landfill once work is completed.

“It was a great opportunity for us to acquire a material that would suit our needs,” said Lowrey. “Stapleton needed to remove the concrete, asphalt and aggregate material so the land could

Stapleton Concrete continued on next page

be developed and we needed it for our cleanup work. We're fortunate to have a large source of good construction materials in close proximity. Stapleton is pleased to have another customer for a large portion of its products, instead of relying solely on the local commercial construction industry. It's truly a win-win situation for both of us."

Lowrey estimates that the Arsenal will buy almost two million tons of crushed concrete. He noted the Arsenal's

alternative was to buy rock from quarries in the mountains and pay to have it trucked through Denver and Commerce City to the Arsenal. Instead, residents will see a pile of crushed concrete on the former airport just north of 56th Avenue until work wraps up in 2010. The location makes the material handy for workers needing to use it and accessible for direct delivery to the site. ■

National Wildlife Refuge Week Includes Bluestem Banquet and Scholarship Breakfast

The Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Society and Two Ponds Preservation Foundation hosted the fourth annual Bluestem Banquet and silent auction on October 14 in celebration of National Wildlife Refuge Week.

The evening included a presentation by Sigrid Ueblacker of the Birds of Prey Foundation. Ueblacker's not-for-profit foundation rehabilitates injured and sick raptors and has had a close working relationship with refuges located across the country.

Proceeds from the banquet's silent auction are used for environmental education projects at the Two Ponds National Wildlife Refuge and for the Adams City, Brighton, and Montbello High School seniors college scholarship program through the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Society. The scholarship program encourages students to learn about the Rocky Mountain Arsenal National Wildlife Refuge and the National Wildlife Refuge System.

This year's college scholarships were awarded at a special breakfast held Saturday, October 16. "The scholarship program, in its third year, is possible through generous donations from numerous companies," said Suzanne O'Neill, president of the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Society. "The list includes Shell Oil Company, Tetra Tech/FW Inc., Shea Homes, Commerce City Business and Professional Association, Wal-Mart, Wells Fargo Bank, United Power, and Research Management Consultants, Inc."

Congressman Bob Beauprez helped present the scholarships to the winners. "It is a privilege to participate in this scholarship program," said Representative Beauprez. "As we all know, the future of our country is in the hands of our youth, and these scholarships provide a stepping stone to greater opportunities that lie ahead."

The scholarship program is open to all graduating students from Adams City, Brighton, and Montbello high schools who write a refuge-related essay. This year's topic

The 2004 scholarship winners are:

Adams City High School:

- Tamar Rose Gipson, 1st place (\$1,500)
- Bianca Mendez, 2nd place (\$1,000)
- Merry Boldt, 3rd place (\$500)

Brighton High School:

- Jared Markley, 1st place (\$1,500)
- Rebekah Squires, 2nd place (\$1,000)
- Nicholas Glasgow, 3rd place (\$500)

Bianca Mendez won the drawing for a free computer.

was the importance of national wildlife refuges in protecting wildlife and conserving lands. "It's a pleasure to provide these local students with the assistance to further their education and to acquaint them with what the Refuge has to offer," said O'Neill. Scholarships were awarded to winners from two of the three high schools (no entries were received from Montbello students).

Plans for the 2005 scholarship program are already underway. For more information about the scholarship program or on sponsorship opportunities, contact the Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Society at 303-289-0820. ■



Suzanne O'Neill, President, Rocky Mountain Arsenal Wildlife Society; Tamar Rose Gipson, 1st Place Adams City High School; Congressman Bob Beauprez; Merry Boldt, 3rd Place, Adams City High School; Stacy Armitage, Education Specialist, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; Bianca Mendez, 2nd Place, Adams City High School; Nicholas Glasgow, 3rd Place, Brighton High School; Rebekah Squires, 2nd place, Brighton High School. Not pictured: Jared Markley, 1st Place, Brighton High School

Become Involved - Provide Your Input Into the Five-Year Review Process

The Arsenal's second Five-Year Review will be underway soon. The yearlong process evaluates whether environmental standards that affect the Arsenal have changed, whether the implementation of the Arsenal's cleanup continues to be protective of public health and the environment, and if it can be expected to remain protective even after completion of the project. The Environmental Protection Agency requires cleanup sites that have remaining contamination and limited use once the cleanup is finished to complete this review every five years. A team consisting of Arsenal and regulatory agency representatives will conduct extensive document reviews, data analysis, interviews, and site inspections.

The Review begins March 31, 2005. A public notice announcing this information will be printed in local newspapers, on the Arsenal's web site - www.rma.army.mil and announced on the Arsenal's Community Information Line - 303-289-0136.

As part of the Review, the team is asking for public input on the following questions by April 30, 2005:

- What is your overall impression of the project?
- What effects have site operations had on the surrounding community?
- Are you aware of any community concerns regarding the site or its operation and administration?
- Are you aware of any events, incidents or activities at the site such as vandalism, trespassing, or emergency responses from local authorities?

- Do you feel well informed about the site's activities and progress?
- Do you have any comments, suggestions or recommendations regarding the site's management or operation?

The Five-Year Review is an excellent opportunity to provide input about past, current and future projects and programs, as well as overall site impressions. We hope that you will take a moment to reflect on how the site is progressing and provide us with your input. You can call the Arsenal's Public Relations Office at 303-289-0250 or visit the Arsenal's web site and click on the Five-Year Review link to provide written comments. Copies of the first Five-Year Review findings, completed in 2000, are available to the public at the Arsenal's Joint Administrative Records and Design Facility and on the Arsenal's web site.

The Arsenal will hold a public meeting and an official public comment period on the report's findings in early Fall 2005. Notices about deadlines for comment periods and the public meeting date and location will be announced in local newspapers and on the Arsenal's web site and Community Information Line. Information about the report, including how to obtain the final document, will be made available once the Review is complete. The Review process concludes with the preparation and delivery of a final Five-Year Review report to the Environmental Protection Agency in December 2005, for its approval. ■

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Proposes Disposal Facility

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is in the process of securing approval for building a facility at the National Eagle and Wildlife Property Repository to safely dispose of unusable parts of eagle carcasses and contraband wildlife products.

The Repository is located within the Arsenal and is operated by the Service's Office of Law Enforcement. "This one-of-a-kind operation serves as the main collection and distribution point for salvaged dead eagles, providing a legal source of feathers for Native Americans for religious ceremonial use," said Bernadette Atencio, supervisory wildlife repository specialist. "It also stores and disposes of abandoned and forfeited wildlife parts and products, making hundreds of items available each year to support the educational activities of schools, museums, and other educational organizations."

The proposed disposal facility, or crematorium, will be housed in a 15- by 20-foot building next to the existing Repository. It will enable the Repository to properly manage and dispose of unusable parts of eagle carcasses and illegal wildlife products that have no educational use. The facility will reduce this material to ash, which then can be disposed of at off-site landfills.

"The Service conducted an Environmental Assessment, which examined environmental impacts associated with constructing the facility," Atencio said. "This study also took into consideration alternative ways to provide for the proper long-term disposal of decomposed and usable eagle carcasses, parts and feathers as well as unusable wildlife products."

Construction is tentatively scheduled to begin in mid-2005 and last approximately three months. "It may be operational in the fall of 2005," Atencio added. The Service will not offer the facility for use by outside entities.

Atencio noted that the crematorium project is not associated with cleanup efforts at the Arsenal and funding from the Service is separate from that which supports the Refuge. "The crematorium is strictly for use by the Repository," she said. "Management of the facility falls under the Office of Law Enforcement of the Service in Washington, D.C., and the Service currently leases the building from the Army."

For questions about the Repository or disposal facility please call 303-287-2110. ■